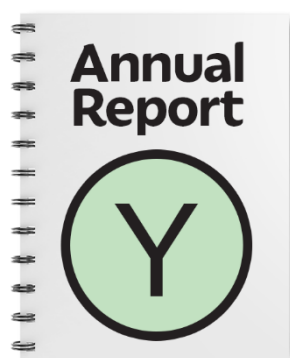




Disabled People's Organisation

Our voices ■ Our choices



Report by Leo Starrs-Cunningham, Convenor of Inclusion Scotland.



The Inclusion Scotland team have worked well in a very difficult year with lots of changes.

We said goodbye to Dr Sally Witcher who lead Inclusion Scotland for 7 years.

She has changed our organization a lot and we will miss her leadership.



We thank Terry Robinson, Derek Kelter, and Irena Paterson for their hard work.

They left our Board this year



Board members look at the work an organisation is doing and check it is working well.



We gave research to the Scottish Government on how coronavirus affected disabled people very badly.

Research means looking at something very closely to get facts, figures and information about it.



We helped to make sure British Sign Language was used when the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP was on television talking about coronavirus.



This year saw 2 important reports:

- the report of the National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership
- the review of social care support.

A review is when something is looked at closely to see if it is working well and what needs to change.

The review said that social care support must change to make it better.



We must all make sure the work in these 2 reports happens.

It will make sure Scotland changes a lot and is better for disabled people.



It will protect our human rights.

It will make sure we are included.

Report from Inclusion Scotland Managers



This year affected disabled people's lives very badly.

Some human rights were taken away.

Rights are freedoms that are protected in law to make sure we are treated fairly and with dignity.



This year also showed how years of spending cuts from the UK Government meant the country was not prepared for the coronavirus pandemic.

Society is still not equal for everyone and is not accessible.



The Inclusion Scotland team changed the way they worked during lockdown so that project work still happened.



Staff got information on what was happening to disabled people.

We used this information to call for work to protect our human rights.



We say thank you to all Inclusion Scotland members and people who support our work.

Work we have done to change things.

The coronavirus pandemic



Disabled people were affected very badly by coronavirus and many of the changes that happened.

Disabled people were not asked about emergency planning

1 in 6 deaths in Scotland were disabled people.



We researched disabled people's experiences of coronavirus.

We gave the information to people who make decisions about policies and ways of working.



This has been part of national plans on how Scotland changes.



Our work on coronavirus has included:

- giving information to MSPs and MPs
- giving information to consultations
- asking disabled people for information and making reports.



We must keep fighting for disabled people to be included in planning for emergencies.

Access to accessible housing



The Scottish Government has said there will be rules from 2025 for new buildings called the Scottish Accessible Homes Standard.

We have been asking for this for a long time.

Brexit



Brexit is the way that the UK has come out of the European Union.

We looked at what difference this could make to disabled people.



We told the Scottish Government that mobility aids from Europe have got more expensive.



People are worried there will not be enough medication or personal assistants.



The Scottish Government has said they will do what they can to make sure this does not affect disabled people.

Climate action



In November 2020 we had an online event about climate change and how disabled people are included.

Climate change is the way the world's weather is changing and getting hotter.



We will work to make sure disabled people and our organisations are included in policy making and are not affected badly by any changes.

The human rights of disabled people



Inclusion Scotland looked at how and why we should include the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into Scottish law.



The Scottish Government has agreed this will happen.

This will protect human rights for disabled people.

Access to Justice – being treated fairly by the law, and having access to police, courts and organisations that give advice.



We worked with the Scottish Just Law Centre.

We got disabled university students extra time for exams.



We got a local council to agree to send accessible information to a disabled man – this took 19 years.

The benefits system



Changes were made to the rules for:

- Disability Assistance
- Fraud Investigation
- Winter Heating Assistance

This means disabled people will get better support.

Social care support



We researched and reported on the how social care support has been taken away during the coronavirus pandemic.

We gave this information to the review of social care.

We told them it has taken too long for things to change.

The 2021 Scottish Parliament Election



We published our manifesto for the 2021 Scottish Parliament election.

A manifesto is a plan that says what you believe in and what work you want the Government to do.

We gave it to the main Scottish political parties to help them to decide what is in their own election manifestos.

Research



This year our research found:

- Life has not got fairer for disabled people since the Scottish Government published its 'A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People' plan in 2016.



- What disabled people thought of the Adult Disability Payment rules.



- Disabled people's experiences of coronavirus and the things put in place because of it.

How our research has changed policies and plans



We thank everyone who has taken part in our research over the past year.

It helps us to make sure disabled people's voices are heard.



Work has finished on the Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning (DRILL) after 5 years.

It helped disabled people to change the way decisions are made about independent living.



Find out more about the different [research projects in Scotland](#) on our website.

Getting disabled people in employment



We have:

- had 192 hours of practice interviews.
- worked with 53 employers.
- delivered 32 internships.

An internship is paid work experience.



We have supported employers to be more inclusive by making small changes to the way they recruit people for jobs.



We made guidance about accessible working from home.



We made an ebulletin for employers.
There are 4 ebulletins every year.

They give information to employers about inclusion and how they can improve the way they work.



We started training that supports employers to be more inclusive.

Getting disabled people in leadership roles



Our Access to Public Appointments project supported disabled people to learn about the work of Board members.

Board members look at the work an organisation is doing and check it is working well.



Boards learnt how to make it easier for disabled people to be members.

In January 2021 we published 8 recommendations to make it easier for disabled people to be Board members.

A recommendation is something we think should happen.



8 people took part in our online Lived Experience Leadership project.

It developed training for disabled people who want to be leaders.

This included supporting disabled people use their own experience of being disabled to create change.



We will make a report about the work we think should happen next.

Getting disabled people involved in politics



Our [Guidance on Accessing Politics](#) supports disabled people to get more involved in politics, from how to contact your local representative to getting involved with a political party.



The Access to Elected Office Fund supports disabled people to run as a candidate in Scottish elections by covering the costs of reasonable adjustments.



Reasonable adjustments are changes employers must make to give a person who is disabled the same chance as anyone else to get and do a job.



The Access to Elected Office Fund:

- gave support and advice to 17 people.
- supported 13 people to run as candidates in the Scottish Parliament Election.
- gave assistive technology, personal assistant support and interpreters.



We supported Disability Wales and the Welsh Government to set up their own Access to Elected Office Fund for the Welsh Parliament elections.



Getting disabled people involved in policies and plans



We have 15 new members on our People led Policy Panel on adult social care support.

The panel use their experience of social care support to change policies and plans.

The panel were the first group to meet with Derek Feeley.

He led the review of adult social care.

He invited one of our members onto his expert advisory group.



The panel gave information to the social care review and to Members of the Scottish Parliament who were meeting about the review and what work should be done.



We got money so Disabled People's Organisations could run projects to help things that had been affected by coronavirus like:

- independent living
- having to stay away from people and feeling lonely
- advice about money



In the Highlands

We started working with a new Disabled People's Organisation called HighAbility.



We had helped to set this up in Highland.

We started our Highland Covid-19 Disability Forum to ask disabled people about coronavirus and how things are changing.



We had an online event called the Highland Covid-19 Disability Summit.

190 people took part and talked about:

- NHS and Council services
- disability benefits the Scottish Government will have control of.



- having access to the internet.



People and groups we want to say thank you to:

- Deirdre Henderson
- Dr Sue Kelly
- Maddi Cassell and the members of the Lived Experience Leadership (LEL) group.
- Our partners in the LEL project: National Lottery, Lead Scotland, Tripod Training, the Open University and Duncan Wallace.
- Philippa Bonnella
- The National Emergencies Trust
- Disability Action Northern Ireland, Disability Wales, and Inclusion London
- Skills Development Scotland and The Law Society of Scotland
- JustRight Scotland and the Scottish Just Law Centre
- AbilityNet
- Adobe, Anderson Strathern, Microsoft, Skyscanner, Glasgow Science Centre and Passion 4 Social
- Blair Lochrie- Microsoft,
Anja Salinger-Carsley – Adobe
Rob Marrs - Law Society of Scotland,
Heather Hepburn - Sky Scanner
Andrew Brown - Anderson Strathern